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## DRINKING WATER INFORMATION & TESTING

The City of Houston Water & Dairy Environmental Microbiology Lab accepts and tests samples of water intended for human consumption and use. Water is tested for the presence of Total Coliform bacteria and E. coli. The analysis takes 24 hours to complete.

Samples must be submitted in sterile treated bottles supplied by the City of Houston Health Department, Harris County Health Department, the Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), or your local health authority.

- Water samples are accepted **Monday – Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm**
- The fee for drinking water testing is \$16.50 per bottle
- Payment must be made when the sample is delivered to the laboratory. We accept checks, money orders, credit cards (Visa, MC, Discover), and City of Houston accounts.
- Samples will not be processed without payment or a City of Houston account in good standing.
- **No cash will be accepted – no exceptions**

### Sample Collection

- Select a cold water faucet, preferably an outside faucet that does not leak (avoid hoses, fire hydrants, dirty areas, and areas behind bushes). Do not take samples from kitchen or bathroom sinks. Avoid sampling on extremely windy days or when it is raining.
- Remove any screen or attachment to the faucet
- Clean the faucet head with isopropyl alcohol or bleach solution and/or flame with a handheld torch.
- Run the water 2 or 3 minutes to clear the line.
- Adjust the flow to a slow, steady stream.
- Remove the shrink band from the bottle (do not use the bottle if the shrink band is missing)
- Remove the lid of the bottle. **Do not touch the inside of the lid or the bottle. Do not rinse out the bottle.**
- Fill the bottle **ABOVE** the 100ml line to at least the shoulder of the bottle, leaving adequate space for mixing. **Do not overfill the bottle.**
- Underfilled and overfilled bottles will not be analyzed
- Replace the lid tightly
- Place the sample in a cooler with ice or ice packs and transport to the lab within 28 hours of collection.
- **Do not freeze the sample.** Frozen samples will not be analyzed.

- If E. coli organisms are **PRESENT**
  - The water contains bacteria that is commonly found in sewage (animal or human) which could include disease producing organisms.
- If Total Coliform or E. coli organisms are **PRESENT** The water is **NOT SAFE** to use for **drinking, bathing, brushing teeth, washing hands, or washing any food you will eat raw.**
- Disinfect the well according to TCEQ instructions (available on our website) and submit another sample before using the water.